

Pourquoi Malady?

by Jørgen Michaelsen

“We do not think that it is now a time for vocabulatoric ‘backlash’, in the shape of some kind of quibbling. Of course, our contribution is, in general, invested with a will to take such exchange into account. However, there are certain types of ‘opposition’ to be distinguished from others. It must be regarded as highly ‘unrealistic’ that contradiction as a rule should be regarded as essentially driven by an ‘hygienic’ impulse.”

— Jørgen Michaelsen, *REFORMATION MONAD*

“The problem with historical projection lies, indeed, in its being always-already overlaid with a plethora of quasi-charismatic objectifications of presence-absence oscillation—the deadweight of which cannot realistically be estimated by, nor, accordingly, thoroughly assimilated in discursive practice; nor can it simply be reconstructed in some sort of highly complex individually imprinted psychology. Then what, one may ask, is the meaning of historical atomization, of the prevailing myopia of the institutional gaze (however productive), of the transformation of subjective exegesis—in the context of the ruling subject paradigm?”

— Jørgen Michaelsen, *GYNOCRAFT; Jul. Bomholt*

“As pointed out by Asger Jorn, the Nordic mind seems to be driven by some general demand for Truth complementary to a demand for Justice in the Latin countries. However, in contemporary spheres of interest or fields of identity, the problem of the demarcation of Truth as opposed to Justice points to issues that go beyond historical and geographic oppositions such as Protestant romanticism vs. Catholic classicism, natural vs. artificial, obscure vs. distinct, underdeveloped exchange-value vs. advanced use-value, organic morphology vs. crystalline morphology, or rule-breaking strategy vs. rule-following strategy—indeed, today the task seems to be the creation of an agenda which will allow discursive practice to go far beyond already established combinations of all-too-complementary positions.”

—Jørgen Michaelsen, *V. Hammershøi Ordering the Neutron Bomb be Dropped Over Copenhagen*

In any encounter, democratic or quasi-democratic, there are two gaps reinforcing each other: one between the sphere of relative transcription and the absolute emotionalization of discourse, another between excessive capacity and parallel convergence. To be sure, artistic practice may sometimes soothe the structural and other embarrassments produced when evident metamorphosis is heavily inscribed in what seems to be everyday absurdity. But the civil obedience of representation itself never dies. However dreadful a situation it may get into, cultural agents lurking in the wings will always be prepared to set it on its feet—at a price.

Ultimately, it goes without saying, nobody is innocent. For example, you may march under the flag of 'writing' or 'text', yet one way or the other remain completely stuck in the framework of 'speech'. It turns out, though, that by changing its target, artistic thought may change its supportive or operative foundation. On the other hand, it is, indeed, as if the intelligent production of art as such always demands a somewhat impossible object of 'teleological necessity'. Moreover, in many ways the patterns of productive intelligence in themselves are becoming increasingly more impotent as modules of sociocultural identification. What many people, including artists, used to enjoy about the beauty of production was precisely the *freedom* of its practice as well as the energies of its ideoplastic implications. Contemplating the meaning, or lack thereof, of production and its historical creations we would wholly escape the fetters of hypocritical pleasure and the straitjacket of vulgar truth. In many cases we would exchange the twilight zone of natural boredom for cheerful political reality. But, suppose that the whole construction of 'public cognition' now fall under the question of how we recognize the symbolic sustainability of sociocultural implication in the first place: How do we know that the specific structure with which we are confronted is indeed part of a relevant general configuration? Indeed, there is no participation in, ignorance of, familiarity with, or absence of 'grand transcriptions' in very-late-capitalist society: they lie before us, radically mutated and fully postcultural, as it were. Particles or fragments of artistic thought, no doubt, pervade all the business of reproductive profiles like a kind of primal or essential 'stupidity', and generally form the sparkling embellishment of all our contemporary surroundings. We are all middle-class art producers. To put it more crudely: the middle classes, going hypercreative, are comfortably having their arses wiped by the invisible hand of 'globalization'. In any case, the question of cultural production is not a question that can be resolved at a creative level alone; it is, of course, inextricably linked to the fate of sociocultural meaning as a whole. No doubt, one could say that occasional artistic practice takes this strange institution called basic perversion to what seems to be the interpretative limits of its development of inner narratives and ultimate artificial virtue. Others would suggest that, today, the sign production of art practice may be considered the *Drosophila melanogaster* of a certain meta-semiotic position. Thus, as a global phenomenon in a historical context characterized by a blurring of the 'boundaries' between modern, postmodern, and postcultural positions, the body of art becomes a semantic 'model organism'. But, although this metaphorical set-up indeed holds a plethora of prospects, one should remember that art for a long period already has been the object of its own complex practice of host-parasite experimentation. Something, perhaps an arrogant paradox, that may suggest itself to us is the difficulty of whether perversion of any kind shows itself *deserving* of the attention and treatment of artistic practice. We need adequately enlightened discussions that do not shy away from the 'chemistry' of stupidity as a source of individual conflict, institutional sterility, *and* artistic surplus. The danger of analyzing any form of artistic intelligence in systematic logical terms is that it might lead us to underestimate its effective contextual impact. Paradoxically perhaps, official art not only has at its command the whole wealth of more or less enigmatic consumption of symbols in the brilliant variety of its representations, it also has the power to proliferate inexhaustibly beyond its original limits by products of *its own*. It has been suggested that the tree of the public good must from time to time be watered with the blood of

extinction. Some would say, following this logic, that in the present circumstances the utilitarianization of artistic virtuality as well as the general engineering of creativity need to become extinct. Although this may seem a bit heavy handed, much indeed seems to indicate the presence of a new paradigmatic framework. Whereas previously the relevant impulse of artistic behaviour was essentially a bottom-up/top-down effect of sorts, it now tends mainly to be an almost uncannily unique blend of inter-idiotic literacy, wilful myopia, and arbitrary futurization. Ultimately, in the future the 'post-creative' development of official art awaits us. Yet new artistic strategies will seek to eliminate or blur what is peculiar to each position and what is common to all positions. Needless to say, there are no two identical types of creative extinction. The very notions of extinction and fossilization are surely intriguing. Perhaps what is needed, from an artistic point of view, is a strategy that allows the super-cathartic self-surveillance in the artistic individual (or body of individuals) to communicate with the more or less specific aims of semiotic logic, as it were. It may be supposed that, in the presence of an immeasurable abundance of social fitness, the official art institution will necessarily lose its traditional meaning as a producer of contemporary relevance. In that sense, official art will tend towards extinction. But what do we mean by fossilization? First and foremost, the object of fossilization is a state of mind that, in terms of artistic motivation, works in ways that cannot easily be described without lapsing into variations on the theme of 'someone else's social logic'. The exact point at which fossilization as a *modus operandi* exhausts its resources in terms of parallel solipsism may be quite arbitrary. Of course, the transition from one level of historical convergence to another is never automatic, and there may be influences of all kinds from level to level. In the end, it would seem, fossilization and pulverization must go hand in hand, the increasingly solid texture of the one must become the exceedingly fluid space of the other in order to stimulate mutation, and the assumptions of banal madness must be either optimized or backgrounded in order to make the whole situation more sensitive to art's specific antisocial potential. For the art producer there can be no easy separation between 'silent history' and background noise (public opinion, etc.), just as there can be no simple separation of what some might call elitist ontology and the self-referential humanity of quite basic enthusiasm. Evidence seems to suggest that representation is neutral in terms of specific pleasure, while, on the other hand, if sober satisfaction needs to rely on it, it can survive quite well without any signifier of consensus, whether it is directed 'elsewhere' or somehow operates in a vacuum. Very serious aims have been ascribed to 'comic insight', which has variously been recommended as a mediator between the obligatory mediocrity of meaning and the conspicuous 'bestiality' of discourse, between the common textures of dominant culture and the privileged incompetence of the signifier, and as the reconciler of these elements in the obstinate conflict and repulsion which their collision generates. There is some ambivalence regarding strategic fossilization. It is worth pointing out that artistic practice thus is taken prisoner by its own dialectical mechanisms, as it were, before it can actually enter into a state of extinction that to a large extent must remain only apparent. On the other hand, the imaginary of the middle-class artist is still running on the inertia of growth, as if by nature. Contemporary society and art should probably both fall under the general category of evident, in terms of dehumanized expectation. Otherness can all too easily be grasped from within the space of some smart delay of

privileged anachronism and by the means of a quasi-ambivalent relation between the 'specific' meaning of 'art-specific disorder' and allegorical independence in an institutional context. It may indeed seem as if sociocultural positions, resources, and modalities *per se* were *unworthy* of our consideration; they are at best so many forms of pre-established interrelationship. Generally, the closures of everyday 'excess' are supposed to be particularly at home in the quest for the adhesion effect of an hegemonic vocabulary. A pornographic reading sometimes proves more appropriate than a sceptical one of the same text. On the other hand, the sceptic himself very often turns out to be a pornographer, and vice versa. At any rate, interpretation seems to presuppose something like a (relatively) peaceful indifference between the contingent conditioning of the reader and the intertextual bureaucracy. If an ethos of 'immaculate articulation' does occasionally achieve some success, it can be so only to a limited extent. It is no doubt the case that reflections on, say, pulverization can be employed as a fleeting pastime to serve the ends of natural pleasure and organic-critical entertainment, to decorate any context, to impart a principle of totality to the external as well as, of course, the internal conditions of social life, and to apply assemblages of otherness-in-sameness and sameness-in-otherness by ejaculating, as it were, mighty (as well as not so mighty) 'asteroids' of always-already integrated afterbirth through the perpetual motion machine of sociocultural algorithms. In this mode of employment, the interpretation of the body politic is indeed not independent, or free. Rather, it triumphs against its own will. If you penetrate into this area you probably would not find out whether it is a black hole or not. Why is that? A clash of forces between practice and pseudo-diversity wiped out your original intentions when you crossed the event horizon to get into that hole. The theme of unconditional mediocrity, so crucial to the formation of sociocultural immunization we are discussing, is reflected in such contemporary phenomena as liberation tourism, obscenely irrelevant lack of illness, and media-friendly sexuality. Mainstream humanity calls for an endless reworking of the entire cultural condition. Thus pulverization will have no interest for us until it can be explicitly and exclusively expressed in terms of 'host objectivity', and, conversely, until such a climax of explicability is reached we shall be no less than ashamed of ourselves. Suppose that such a development has already begun on an objective level. The placebo mystery of non-specific specificity is gradually being transformed into the phantom enigma of oceanic self-misunderstanding. The interpretation of so-called communication is an open and infinite task to be constantly resumed, always opening up new frontiers. There are always too many utterly impotent invocations of myopic power, too much mercilessly predictable laughter, too many appellations that were better dissolved again—or are in need of some terrorist handling, if you like. This perhaps goes some way towards explaining the enormous *durée* of this mode of hegemony, the depth of its ties and its amazing ability to endure. The democratic institution of communication generates out of itself a more or less contingent space of exchange as a means of reconciliation between the body politic and the interpretation of literacy among the citizens. Sometimes, norms of tentative cruelty allow for asymmetrical negotiation and an affective capacity for dissent. But a genuine articulation of collapse is only to be found beyond the immediacy of political ecology. The balance of the relevant alarm signals against the possible all-or-none responses of cultural 'cheating behaviour' is not incidental to artistic privilege but essential to its basic meaning. Whether we like it or not, we need to

adapt to the mythological 'bottleneck' of self-destructive authority, though it must be in the service of a position that will never reach its own critical saturation point—a stratagem of 'ascetic mistake', if you will. Fossil functions and traces of visual pleasure no doubt present to us the essence of contemporary amorphousness. Certainly, the actions and wants of cultural producers often need to be fished out of what seems to be obscurity, rescued from the blanket dominance of 'too average' or 'made perverted'. It has been suggested that the peculiar mode to which the cultural mind belongs no longer satisfies our need for tolerable prostitution in terms of tragic irony. But, alas, that is not all. The beautiful days of cultural practice embedded in divers forms of struggle and user-unfriendly irreconcilability, and the golden age under the general emblem of social emptiness, have passed. Our postcultural present of conformist anti-conformism is not even favourable to well-adapted positions of reluctance to confront. What would happen if we revisited the parameters of public opinion from the perspective of obscene dignity rather than the compensatory microcosm of a global syndrome? Even the most cursory investigation into sociomental production in the age of increasingly postcultural mechanisms reveals that it is still impossible for the producer to abstract from personal survival by will and resolve, or to contrive for herself or himself and bring to pass, by means of education or removal from the relations of life, a truly sustainable monadic condition or state of mind that would replace what has been digested and metamorphosed into an unknown atom, or 'personal animalcule' at best, in the ever-expanding coprolith that is the body of sociocultural totality. Society does not spring from a permanent reality of reproductive 'storage' that has to be posed against what is said and written about future crises; rather, it springs from the concrete ways in which the registers of individual reflex are positioned, often harshly or stupidly, as 'the human condition'. Time marches on. In terms of comic perspective, the future is, and for us must remain, on the side of its highest power of motivation, a thing of the past. The 'logic' of the present always has an aspect of reabsorbed violence in its basic cumulative structure. A certain to-ing and fro-ing in an unstable compromise between purely discursive need and 'brilliant messages', between simple ignorance and the mutations of ideology, defines our age's specific profile of transformation—and is perhaps the best way for the exercise and exegesis of sociocultural value to survive in a world without any real desire for transparency in terms of relevant 'debitworthiness'. In reality, though, what is aroused in us, as if by penetrative influence, is above and beyond our immediate enjoyment of cosy disorder and, together with it, our power of relevant judgement, inasmuch as we subject the copysphere of self-understanding to monstrous closure. Empathetic liquidation is not necessarily malign. Also, self-supersession by means of 'structural obviousness' is a quite normal behaviour today. Hence the endless fascination that the tirelessly recapitulated articulations of obscenely transparent positions, scenarios, patterns, schemes, mentalities, perspectives, and mechanisms holds for us. The distribution of contemporary ideodiversity involves the most complex presuppositions, partly in reference to its 'intuitive' component, partly in respect of its still opaque medium and element. Let us avoid any misunderstanding: it would be unrealistic, indeed farcical, to believe that a fixed model of 'monstrosity' can be deduced from certain sociocultural constants. At a certain point, in any case, good 'reasons' for opacity can also arise from within the melting pot of transparency itself. Thus the 'cute-but-stupid' matrices in which sociocultural discourse seems to dissolve itself partly

belong, like any contemporary phenomenon that may be considered essential, to the realm of modifiable reflexes. As nostalgia for 'uncontaminated' forms of disorder mutates, the role of these matrices increasingly is to produce the right kind of background idea, with the right kind of complex qualities, as the raw material for potential fine tunings. In any case, the real question is not one of simulation but one of contamination. Cultural replication is not at the mercy of mere chance. It takes little effort to play the games of disoriented enthusiasm; some 'arrogant hypothesis' is needed here. The quasi-impenetrable vehicle, or replicator, of some variant of the transvaluation of all values may not be an extreme enough figure of historical entanglement, of the installation of meaning. If we now investigate the selection pressures of modern sociocultural evolution, we find two opposing tendencies. On one side, we see the 'pygmy monolith' of consumer behaviour. On the other side, we see the all-too-contingent intelligence and high contemplation of the citizen. Is this the end of consumption? No, of course not. Whereas consumption is formed in opposition to the logic of sociocultural withdrawal, the latter reappears in the former as its obligatory horizon once it has been properly established: indeed, the cultural consumer demands the citizen's 'negativity'. Regarding cultural practice as such, this is not the place to go into detail about trompe-l'oeil fitness in terms of pre-established contractuality or potential idiosyncrasy. Suffice it to say that our constructions of complexity are very seldom capable of avoiding the temptation of self-consumption. The presence of the outer world in sociocultural practice inevitably sends shockwaves through our lives and bodies. There is a long polemical tradition that has continually stressed the function of oversimplification in orthosemiosis. In the perspective of an overall equilibrium, the gulf between the postcultural agent and cultural representation is often linked to some idea of a 'storage crisis'. Even in the very superficial description given here, it is clear that 'the self' is not simply a species of reading paradigm, now gradually collapsing under its own weight. An obvious characteristic of social identity is its gargantuan appetite that enables it to consume large quantities of forced moves. It might, indeed, appear as if the contemporary ecology of sociocultural enthusiasm were a simple matter. The fact remains that whenever the signifier of the individual ego is introduced, randomness and maximization increase. The metaphysics of society and the realm of individual meaning both bear the stigmata of subsumption, both contain elements of entropy. It is very important to keep in mind that, in a certain sense, modern dehumanization has changed nothing at all. Naturally, we all want change. Our culture is dominated not by heterogeneous appropriation but by overall instrumentalization. What cannot be absorbed by the coprolith in postcultural peristalsis will probably lead to caricature. This can never be a privilege—unless you invest caricature with utopian qualities. Surely, we would never suggest that what is lost in repetitive transmission will be replaced in a quite organic way by 'cascade reactions' of cumulative motivation. Millions of voices, and millions of copies of those voices, can simply be generated by the use of political sampling. That which is of the nature of privileged fullness in many cases reveals itself in the light of some 'external kenosis'. Today's participatory citizens have one advantage over the ancients: other things being equal, with a permanently expanding armoury of useful new expressions disgorged by a cornucopia of contemporary insight, they have a battery of new excuses for getting it wrong. The obscene energy of political motivation has not died out, but its status in terms of unquarantinability has declined and its

mutational functions have changed. Traditionally, the power of political ideology has been closely connected to the thinking class, and it may be said that power as a fundamental property has involved both the conspicuous repetition of intelligence and the mutation of the oversimplification implied. On the other hand, 'the unknown' is a fiction of much artistic discourse; it is a 'systematization' of quixotic modification, prejudicing us towards a belief that the truth of materiality is manifested through the objective stupidity of privileged contractuality. Such delusions can be effective nonetheless, some suggest. In recent years, artistic practice has been expected to broaden the political imaginary. (It would perhaps be more correct to characterize that practice as a sort of conceptual 'volume booster'.) Indeed, today every element of artistic relevance points to another and has no, or very little, value in itself. The proof of the breakdown of obsolete autonomy is everywhere. Obviously, some of the pressure for expanding 'politicized' individual content comes from the dominance of conspicuous utilitarianism. Contemporary art may at some point turn into a mutational incubator of unconditional complexity. But this prospect must not satisfy us. Many citizens today simply assume that society is able to influence the space of entanglement between artistic mutation and the political environment. As recombinant capitalism expands, seemingly without limit, one question in particular becomes ever more pressing: What is the relationship between the selfish burden of 'me' and the black hole of 'the others'? It is, no doubt, the case that we, in our postcultural times, must, in our labour of self-understanding, start, not from the idea of society as such but from a demand that society itself be 're-digested', as it were, and thus politically re-invested as well. The snowball is rolling. More and more citizens call for an end to false empathy. Many still regard the fading empire of mass-communication as a realm of contingent value that paradoxically transcends public closure, even though it is impossible to understand postcultural contingency as a phenomenon that can be securely situated in a public-private continuum. Then again, the citizen herself carries in her brain a smorgasbord of potential discursive encapsulation as the 'panic value' that makes possible her very appearance as a responsible member of the body politic. Sociocultural enthusiasm must contain all the millstones of the political universe as well as the capacity for total unrepeatability. It must reconcile these by combining the functional hope of quasi-monolithic regularity with the somehow boundless zigzag of fresh argument. Only thus can enthusiasm be apprehended as a true phenomenon of fullness. Only then can it be conceived of as fully fertile out of its own resources, in contrast to the contemporary barrenness of privatized public revolt. In the morass of artistic ambition, the future is nothing if not uncertain. Even the use of such words as 'morass' and 'ambition' is highly misleading. A commonly held view is that any analysis of the institutional context of art destroys the mystery of that context and that artistic sensibility is fundamentally antipathetic to the interpretation of its environment. In ordinary or normal artistic production, little or no difficulty attaches to such applied deadweight. A spectre haunts contemporary artistic reproduction—the spectre of naturalization as a site of mediation. Yet 'hauntological' transmission of phantasmal generalization offers just one example of how apparent artistic 'sameness' and all-too-represented 'otherness' are not mutually exclusive categories. We need only lay down as essential the view that, though art is undeniably driven by an incorruptible ethos, it is also in constant need of dubious influences, indeed of embarrassment of the worst kind. On the other

hand, the hygienic excesses of the art producer may be limitless, once the key elements of her project have been sufficiently compromised. Nevertheless, this slippery term, 'compromised', continues to provoke discussion, while new terms such as 'plus convergence' (describing the ability of artistic solipsism to develop into social value), and 'back enchantment' (describing the situation whereby social practice in general is transformed into artistic ontology) are introduced in Scandinavia. A main fetish of certain segments of the postcultural consensus is unquestionably the cyborg, inasmuch as the posthuman body has a purely technical side, which usually extends into the region of nostalgia for utilitarianism. It bears repeating that art matters, machines matter—but not the nostalgia for the art of any particular machine. The frustration of many emerging art producers facing the cultural dominance of the postcultural 'anomaly' often provokes a comfortably 'schizophrenic' gesture of protest. Desire for free-floating ontology generally announces itself in very early youth, when the head is still empty. In the context of our daily lives, the artistic challenge appears awash in a chiaroscuro of semi-utilitarian metamorphoses that generally seems to invite painstaking reorganization of fallout from referentiality. Cultural production and aesthetic gestures can be ranked on many different scales, though it is customary to use the conceptual-nonconceptual scale for rating contemporary art. As a matter of fact we often enough see elements of conceptuality subsist very beautifully alongside a remarkable barrenness of nonconceptuality. Ideological diversity and voices of self-infiltration transform into each other without necessarily communicating with each other. Apparently, a specific set of discursive frameworks, contextual schemes and strategies of relative adaptation vis-à-vis organizations and institutions ensures the peculiar identity and continuity of art practice. In artistic behaviour all depends on the Brownian movements of the relevant components. The art producer should always consider the use of the 'ascetic mistake' as an important imaginary stimulant. After all, the fundamental vacuum of scarcity is very often regarded as a highly experimental and risky, even slightly monstrous, zone of intelligent survival, with an emphasis on weirdly labile forms of irony and 'evil elasticity'. Nevertheless, we are wont to prize dead 'something' over living 'nothing'. In general, the dead-alive dichotomy is used to describe a poorly understood symbolic economy of 'safely extinct referents' (even though the referents are 'merely' rare, vulnerable, or endangered). In general, it seems clear that the sociocultural content of what is dead does not have to obey the laws of what is alive in the same way that artistic motivation does. We must admit, of course, that the chronic parallelism between art and the body of social 'intuition' does not in itself pose a threat to the logic of either, nor to the at times somewhat bizarrely adaptive death-drive of much contemporary art. The dramatic evolution, current problems, and present status of the contemporary dichotomy are not easily summarized. Even those who now and then engage directly with the possible resources of semantic parasuicide do not escape the vampiric agenda of sundry 'softnesses'. The need out of which social closure arises originates in the fact that the overall 'design space' of cultural ecology is often, in some sense considered to be a reactor of primal fantasy. Still, the role of 'the unconscious' in such pragmatic gravity has been of some interest. Obviously, the pathology of art and the pathology of politics are not, and never will be, equivalents. Obvious, also, they can overlap. Reciprocal 'inertia envy' is a thoroughly exceptional form of structural redundancy. No doubt this form may in some cases in itself be

manifold, indeed productive in terms of ambiguity—and, again, in such diversity varied contents may be comprehended, including ‘ourselves and our others’, ‘the *punctum* that implodes the copysphere’, or simply ‘change of air’. In summation, a thorough interpretation of social disappointment as an ‘inverted’ function of creative tension is not within the scope of this work. Some citizens argue that the concept of ‘ambivalence’ is a myth, a mystification devised by agents who are themselves essentially ‘non-starters’ in terms of the ‘flatness’ of everyday life. It is evident, however, that the institutional effects of ambivalence are always-already dialectically entangled in the maelstrom of mainstream culture as well as in post-neo-avant-gardist bootstrapping. We are dealing with phenomena that cannot be considered neutral or ‘autonomous’. Nor do they bear marks of ‘explanation anxiety’ in relation to a limited horizon of general consumption, for they are relatively determined by excess, and remain essentially related thereto. On the other hand, there seems to be some confusion regarding the nature of excess itself. In most of the world’s rich countries, and especially in the Scandinavian countries, human consciousness is dominated by ‘scrap heaps’ of modern dichotomy. The content of consciousness thus in some respects is best considered from the angle of a *bricoleur*, as it were; in any case, even if the content is a symptom of fading complexity, it can be seized and fixed by transforming it into powerful variants of cultural intention. The analysis of ambivalence is, we believe, of some interest. Only the most isolated individuals can escape its influence. In general, we may summarize by saying that, as a matter of mere environmental determination, the artistic individual cannot maintain a rivalry with the genuine reluctance to confront, and if she did, she would look like a worm wriggling after an elephant, or something along those lines. (Actually, we do not really mean to suggest that the outer world is simply ‘elephantine’—our wording is perhaps misleading. This is also true of our use of the word ‘worm’. Perhaps the whole metaphor is dysfunctional or ill chosen.) Many art producers argue that the mental framework associated with the contemporary institutions and structures of post-quixotic transmission tends to be of low quality, bland, escapist, standardized, stereotyped, conformist, and trivial: a veritable incubator of the ‘Pinocchio drive’. On the other hand, as Samuel Butler so eloquently said, “Are we not ourselves creating our successors [...] daily giving them greater skill and supplying more and more of that self-regulating, self-acting power which will be better than any intellect?” Conversely, as I myself have stated, “The interchange between individual subtlety and the concept of central administration as more or less autotelic is a constant one, and there has been a considerable, quite empathic—perhaps even conspiratorial—traffic between the two modes of Nordic superstructure and their respective discursive tensions (for instance, the one may basically consider the other as little more than an exhaust pipe for its own metabolism; an interpretation which, however, implies the notion of a subsuming totality—a principle of complementarity, if you like). If we eliminate from the start any notion that the conventions of realistic representation of the perspectives and intensities of late-welfare discourse can be applied mechanically [...] as a metaphor in the historical process of transforming Social Democrat equilibrium into a heuristic framework of peri-institutional fertility, then we will begin to approach an interesting kind of strategy vis-à-vis the hitherto rather ill-defined (anti-)ideological situation.” Thus, the body politic may be interpreted as a ‘peristaltic’ apparatus, with the sociocultural individual situated inside its intestinal canal as an endosymbiotic ‘monad’. A tempting but simplistic

response to the peristalsis/monad divide is to reclassify the totality of historical processes as digestion, to argue that 'our times' must be described 'peptically', as it were. Yet it would be more appropriate to suggest that the interrelationship between peristalsis and monad can most productively be interpreted on a contingent basis, as long as the parallel logic implied is strictly observed. One issue that becomes self-evident when exploring the symbolic potential of 'peptic' signifiers is that different individuals, institutions, disciplines, and discourses understand them differently, depending on their focus. Consider this: we hypostatize 'the Monad' (henceforth capitalized) as a designation for a quasi-solipsistic agent interacting with other similar agents that cannot become objects of unconditional mutual empathy; and we hypostatize 'Peristalsis' (henceforth capitalized) as a designation for an organically omnipresent element surrounding the Monad, with the potential to gradually break down or at least modify the Monad, while at the same time being relatively vulnerable to endogenous influences produced by the Monad. From an Olympian position, the Monad and Peristalsis share the same (contingent) world and the same (contingent) language. Inevitably, they 'invest' in each other, inasmuch as neither of them wants the equilibrium of their functional interrelationship, indeed their interconnectedness, to become too unsettled—although occasional turbulence cannot be avoided. Varieties of transparency emanating from Peristalsis almost always occur, at least partly, in varieties of opacity secreted from the Monad. Yet the peptic processes naturally grow frigid or chilled in exact proportion to the resemblance between Peristalsis and the Monad, or are even converted into tedium and repugnance. Is there a nostalgia for transcending the fact that the Monad is not essentially a phenomenon capable of being 'abolished' in terms of Peristalsis? In reply, it should hardly be necessary for us to remark that we have been fully aware all along that, historically, the Monad has not been predominantly approached as an organic phenomenon in an all-embracing peptic apparatus but rather as a locus or vehicle of 'autonomous content'. It is evident, though, that the Monad by no means is a simple case of 'nourishing the system'. But however true it may be that there is something 'originally monadic' in Peristalsis itself, from one point of view, the strategies of appropriation at which it aims are not necessarily the primary concern underlying the Monad's behaviour. In summation, it is more than possible that in fantasizing about the 'redemption' of some possible 'post-colonial' condition we are pursuing a mirage, to say the least. We more than suspect that 'the final solution'—if such exists—will not involve just one single trajectory of sociocultural digestion but the overall multitude of the intestinal flora. To put things into perspective, the average human organism consists of around 10,000,000,000,000 cells, with roughly ten times that number of microorganisms in the intestines. The metabolic activity of these bacteria is equal to that of a virtual organ, compelling many to describe the intestinal bacteria as a 'forgotten' organ. Therefore, the intestinal flora *in toto* should be considered a 'third' agent somewhere in between the Monad and Peristalsis. Could our interpretation perhaps be criticized for being too deterministic? Are we really suggesting some sort of mechanical doctrine? Let us investigate: contemporary practices of sociocultural transmission tend to be emotional, spontaneous, personal, serious, autographic, and morally committed—in short, they are deeply trusted by some and deeply mistrusted by others. What is the true content of symbolic survival, and with what aim is this content to be exposed? The concept of 'survival' is essentially a residual one, which has remained after subtracting 'body' from the

ancient concept of 'humanism'. If, generally speaking, we are concerned with a purpose that is universal and not contingent, it follows that this purpose cannot but be cultural. Social compulsion, or compulsive social differentiation, may be regarded as a sub-category of culture. However, these issues only become interesting when we question concepts such as 'struggle' and 'destruction' in a fundamental way. Contemporary practices of non-harmful coexistence are very often unemotional, deliberate, systematic, impersonal, humorous, ironic, detached, non-autographic, and amoral. Many postcultural producers and consumers put a lot of trust in those practices, it would seem. From a certain point of view it has to be asserted that, in terms of aggression, the higher explicitness ranks, the more it is bound to admit into itself a certain element of contractual opacity. It has frequently been observed that the unavoidable blind spots of prevailing opinion cannot simply be described as points of departure for potential subversion. Opinion as such, public as well as private, is structurally generated. It is essentially a consensual phenomenon. Nevertheless, it is also a transmitter of a subtle kind of violence. In turn, the basic assumptions of approximate social symmetry are distorted. A purpose of this discussion is to draw attention to local side-effects caused by cultural practices that are nourished by intervening in the violence of opinion—which is generally far more heterogeneous, complex, and subtle than our attackers or parasites allow. Yet there are also ways of reading and representing these practices that are highly compatible with consensual transmission. Strategies of 'baroque withdrawal' are, in this case, only one among several means that sometimes prove useful and can be quite effectively applied for the purpose of maintaining a simulacrum of responsible co-adaptation. It seems unnecessary to go to extremes as regards production of subjectivity. Let us not pause to consider whether or not, say, idiolectal mutations are culturally beneficial or necessary, whether or not they meet any real needs of the human species, etc. In artistic practice, the basic idea of 'language' in many cases seems to combine a certain sense of discursive self-preservation with an element of self-adhesive identity, as it were, inasmuch as the object to be represented anticipates the 'penetration' of the signifier, folds back on it, and seems to produce an 'immune response', not only in the art producer but in the art mediator and the art consumer as well. Therefore it seems reasonable to judge that the mental effect in question results from an institutional or pseudo-institutional influence and thus can be considered an objective phenomenon. As it turns out, however, in an environment sufficiently saturated with imaginary rationality, the signifiers of pure artistic fullness are encountered in a variety of forms, parallel or convergent. A good moral can be drawn from every genuine experience of aesthetic saturation, but of course, in doing so, much depends on the interpretation and on the person drawing the moral. Usually, we all feel a strong fascination for the dynamics of cultural production: its stimuli, its latencies, its responses. But consider this: phrases such as 'we all' and 'usually feel' apparently suggest some kind of intrinsic democratic dimension. Is this actually the case? The homeostasis of representation is among the basic laws of survival in Peristalsis. The essential mechanisms of sociocultural hypertrophy involved are obscure, and probably must remain so. In artistic behaviour, almost miraculously, some 'content' of idiopathic pleasure is transmitted from the Monad to a segment of its environment. And from here, it may somehow be enhanced and distributed until it is totally transformed into collective excitation. It has therefore been suggested that the social value of art and culture consists in

proliferation. Naturally, such oversimplification is crass and must be taken with a grain of salt. It is becoming increasingly clear to us that our knowledge in this field is structurally limited. To understand the intraception of the body politic, and explain or interpret its mechanisms adequately, is a complex task. The influence of the Monad on Peristalsis may reveal itself better in what agents avoid doing, rather than what they actually do. At heart, some would suggest, the (apparent) transparency of the social contract only repeats, or even enhances, the opacity produced by our leaving the state of nature. Others would go further still and insist that anything that might look transparent in the local instance is actually nothing but global opacity run amok. The medium of accumulation is often employed as if it were a completely transparent window on some isomorphism idealized as the case may be. Now, sociocultural sustainability demands experimentation, but survival in the space of conceptual behaviour also demands a technology of sufficiently degradable signifiers. A relationship of entanglement between requisite aversion and tolerance to representational privilege in the presence of contractuality is of more than passing effect. Then, on the one hand, the permanent osmotic condition between the Monad and Peristalsis keeps a vision of utopia alive, while, on the other hand, the destruction of large quantities of 'baroque' repertoires sometimes also ruins the resources of pragmatism. Until now, investigation in this field has mainly focused on 'cheating behaviour', primarily concerned with maintaining itself as an example of nonsectarian self-adhesion at the expense of productive self-cancellation or its own long-term differentiation. The historical effects of forced moves inflicted by the Monad on Peristalsis are detectable only during periods of overall punctuation. Here, the regulative activity performed by the above-mentioned Forgotten Organ (henceforth hypostatized and capitalized) has remained in shadow. Most of the attention has been on the Monad as the 'digestive' bad conscience of Peristalsis. Thus, the Monad has been regarded as dysteleological to the highest degree, and indeed for good reason. The Monad must, as it were, be approached in a way that is not determined by any kind of specificity as regards discursive exposure. How to do this? Many different attempts have been made, including strategies of adequately modified hypochondria, contractual oversimplification, monomania, myopia, and diverse species of 'yummy' displacement or *détournement* of intelligence. However, evidently enough, the Monad remains opaque, inaccessible, and not fully displayed to any old strategy or participant, however incompetent or deliberately underdeveloped. An obscene depth of method is needed to fathom the space between the Monad and Peristalsis. Although it is very difficult to understand the apparent effects of the Monad on the Forgotten Organ, they can undoubtedly be understood and interpreted as so many forms of delay. It should be acknowledged that far from all tendencies within the sociocultural sphere manifest the characteristics of acceleration. We can go further again and, ultimately, come close perhaps to more evident forms of intraception. In any event, the Monad always carries with it some aspect or particle of the Forgotten Organ in the realm of Peristalsis, like a clandestine traveller or, at least, the trace or echo of a certain transcription. Indeed, it should be argued that the prospect of the Forgotten Organ is in many cases a way of giving the exhausted Monad an extra lease on life by making Peristalsis bearable a while longer. Once such closure occurs, teleopathy clearly becomes a major temptation. We must ask ourselves: When push comes to shove, what is the effective relationship between this gravity of the Forgotten Organ and the opacity of the

Monad? Could it be there never was a 'true' caesura between them in the first place? Are we, in fact, facing Siamese twins obliged to take turns to support each other vis-à-vis Peristalsis? And we should never stop asking: What kind of collusion? For whom? And serving what purposes? Yet it is important that we identify our own sources of intraceptual information. The study of certain delicate problems in the contemporary analysis of sociocultural phenomena has been simplified to the point of caricature. Thus, in the advanced countries of the world, there are already millions of people who practice sociocultural 'farcification', who enjoy consuming sociocultural objects and effects in a 'farcical' way. Many people are indeed moved to the height of 'sustainability' only by a sense of deliberate farce in terms of social self-preservation. The concept of farce, though, may in our interpretation simply be considered a punctual reflex, perhaps a minor trajectory, on the continuum between Peristalsis and the Monad. Various limitations, weaknesses, and problems are associated with all forms of democratic deflatability, and some of these forms or patterns are highlighted in the discussion of relevance criteria for adequate attention. Very deep in the Nordic identity lies the idea that the incorporation of 'sovereign' behaviour is distinct from the structures of collective humiliation. Social experience within itself holds principles of post-optimistic anticipation as well as values of genuinely proportional representation. Frequently, what we here might call non-farcical strategies of sociocultural production or consumption, are attacked, not for exploiting the privilege of the tragic but for being difficult, obscure, and lacking in socially degradable content as well as cultural appeal. A gap always separates the realities of 'parallel integrity' from the pragmatism of unavoidable aversion. Structurally, the same goes for the interrelationship between the Monad and Peristalsis. As for the triumphant consumption of omnipresent consensus and general equilibrium in the Scandinavian sphere, it bears a conspicuous similarity to the Forgotten Organ. In terms of artistic practice, the problem of developing a relevant and effective 'utilitarian' form of behaviour cannot be resolved in just a few years. Some would suggest that we need something that not only warns the citizens about their own self-adhesion but also stimulates them to take quasi-quixotic action to somehow join the Forgotten Organ in a reflexive way, as it were. And one could go on to suggest that artistic practice should deliver that 'something', thereby finally becoming a benign member of the body politic and contributing to the dominant narratives of self-realization so dear to the citizens. The way in which that type of reasoning is fundamentally connected to consensual anticipation is not, indeed, difficult to grasp, especially in a Scandinavian context. But that is not all. Today there is virtually no discourse in Europe, the USA, and Australia that does not, directly or indirectly, manifest the influence of this 'longing for the common gut'. It has even been suggested that political narrativizability has now reached the status of an imperative. Of course, this generalization is a little too sweeping to be true. And hereby, it would seem, we are at the very heart of the problem of postcultural unreality. Does the 'extended' metaphor of the body politic hold up? Some would definitely suggest it does not. Indeed, some have most derogatorily described it as 'the gut delusion'. It has also been suggested that, although traditional forms of cultural behaviour to a remarkable degree persist in most 21st-century sociocultural scenarios, this does not imply that the global body politic cannot in a long-term perspective be infused with much-needed new vigour without automatically turning into some sort of defecation-oriented Leviathan. What is needed, some maintain, is

for the cultural imaginary to cut loose from intraception as such and announce its full power in terms of self-transparency and pulverization. On the other hand, there are those who suggest we consider the situation more carefully. It might very well be that things are not simply black or white. Most likely, there will always be an overwhelming element of grey. Or, one might say, at a certain remove everything will almost certainly look unigrey. First and foremost, we have to expand our notion of pulverization. Otherwise, we will not be able to produce a framework capable of an adequate and satisfactory understanding of the condition we are in. So many 'pious' variations of differentiation are in play. They do not pulverize at all; they simply recombine a little bit. Actually, most species of 'contemporary exposure' rely upon some sort of consensual anticipation or expectation, that is, an 'external' structure of motivation, rather than intraception. Then again, there are a large number of strategies that apparently depend upon more traditional parameters of fitness and yet seem to operate 'implicitly' on the basis of some dialectical relation to Peristalsis (although different nomenclatures are applied). We can see here a more-than-potential slide towards a mutually supportive opposition, where 'pulverization' simply seems to serve to strengthen the dominant sociocultural institutions and algorithms. The key, or core, realization would seem to be this: Death is okay; getting stuck is not. In this context, at its most elementary, anomalies are an element of 'surplus fitness' that pop up all of a sudden in the midst of adaptation. Some producers and consumers of art see this process as a form of autonomous ecology that mindlessly celebrates the worst features of survival. However, as long as we think of pulverization in terms of escape reaction, we remain victims of an attitude that experiences the practice in question as a more or less vulnerable form of behaviour. But pulverization 'proper' always involves a kind of short-circuit between identity and immunity. Then again, mutational failure is very often the cradle of unintended regeneration. Thus, one is stuck inside a model comparing obscene contingency to the detritus of self-cancellation, and, on the one hand, implies random consensualization, but, on the other, may very well also imply the anticipation of an arms race in terms of requisite contextualization. The main point not to be missed here is the permanent presence of the Forgotten Organ in the space between the Monad and Peristalsis: the anamorphic stain of the gut flora on the sociocultural citizen-consumer as well as on the body politic, if you like. To a great extent, the movement of the individual within its microenvironment is also a movement of the Forgotten Organ within the macroenvironment of Peristalsis. But the exact dynamic between totality and its moments has so far been left obscure and uninterpretable, as it were, because of the prevailing, all-too-regenerative mentality separating the imaginary of 'endosymbiosis' from the element of reversion so badly needed. In the mediation of contemporary sociocultural practice, the complete absence of 'uninterestingness' seems to be the necessary condition under which its symbols can become significant. What stands out about this practice is the degree of coagulation it creates as opposed to other possible forms of differentiation. Yet there can be no 'contextual guarantee': structurally, an environment that was originally receptive may soon turn out to be hopelessly collapsed. A one-to-one critique of expectation, though, would strike us as a very bad idea. Considered in the context of the Monad-versus-Peristalsis-'via'-the-Forgotten-Organ, however, the situation is somewhat different. The moment in which one understands the strategies of self-preservation partly as a reflexive product or epiphenomenon of immunization, one

also understands that resistance to engage in the consensus is not necessarily a non-privileged position; indeed, it may in some sense be *beyond* privilege. Close consideration of the ecology of structural expectation produces a picture in which the relationships between individual agents and the institutional bodies seem to constantly shift: the greater the content of variable altruism, the greater the imperative of selfishness implied, if you like. We shall not go into the details of representation here. As a total body of transmission, Peristalsis can never be enclosed in a theory of evolution anyway. It is impossible to deal substantively with the ontology of motivation without looking into the realm of reversion. The positions in play are quite complex. The donor represents a point of no return in terms of the receptor. However, if the receptor falls victim to a misplaced self-tolerance, the donor may very well come to represent an eternal return of pointlessness. The problem with the 'myopic' aspect involved here, as we see it, is this: How do we produce a space between Peristalsis and the body politic that makes possible a reciprocal critique that is permanently mutating and always simultaneously the subject of its own transmission and pulverization? Or, if you will, how do we make sure that the point of no return in itself is not mistaken for the return of no point? As soon as the concept of 'mediation' appears and begins to proliferate conceptually within an ideological formation that is sufficiently saturated by 'historical meaning', it takes on a new meaning. Very often, configurations of hopeless transcription and mutational self-exclusion cancel each other out and collapse into arbitrary loops or contingent leaps. Where does this polymorphism begin or end? What would count as a boundary? Some would suggest that a loss of 'immediacy' can only catalyze a general decrease in the state of functional simplicity. The energies released appear to dissolve the boundaries between external transmission and internal pulverization. Taking a look around, it becomes immediately evident that the legacy of 'Difference' threads its way through much of what is going on today. What factors of interpretative motivation vis-à-vis an ideological approach would account for the variation in the overall setup between the Monad and Peristalsis? Is the *modus operandi* simply doomed to be the object of 'limits to intelligence'? There can be little doubt that the processes discussed here must be considered paradoxical. However, it has often enough been suggested that no complete understanding of the social contract and its democratic content is possible without considering the concept of 'paradox'. In our analysis, we suggest that the body politic can be freshly brought into focus by being described in terms of Peristalsis and its interrelationship with the Monad and the Forgotten Organ. Once 'the common gut' has been observed in its variations, and the 'reasons' for it have been made clear, perhaps it will be an easy matter to take the reconfigured modalities of transmission by the 'compulsive' influence of pulverization to the point they used to reach by taken-for-granted resources of ready-made institutional meaning. Simply stated, pulverization here refers to the process of total internalization so that the principle of 'a priori' incorporation of Peristalsis is itself in turn incorporated, if you will. Or, the Monad becomes its own Peristalsis. Reflexively, it becomes the context of its own Forgotten Organ: Let the blood of what is outside become the seed of what is inside, to use a metaphor. As a further figure of analogy, we may, of course, consider the Klein bottle whose closed surface has only one side, formed by passing one end of a tube through the side of the tube and joining it to the other end. One of the key changes generated by this 'catastrophe' is found in the basic threshold of degradability taking

place in Peristalsis. Yet the Monad still contains its own sense of closure. While ego-alien ideas or fragments of discourse are registered in relevant ways, there are of course also lots of 'missed articulations' between genuinely absurd and simply unattractive 'key points'. A fundamental criterion of 'fullness' in the 'reformed' Monad seems to be its ability to mobilize, in terms of more or less specific sociocultural stimuli, the entire subjective-objective body of enthusiasm it is now capable of producing. And although concepts such as 'subjectivity' and 'otherness' often seem to delimit the debates over the true potential of the Monad, new metaphors emerge from the process and old ones are tested for value. A central theme in the Monad-become-Peristalsis-and-vice-versa is that of 'sideways expansion'. The gaze of the body politic flattens out into a sort of random panoptic sequence in which the pressure of power collapses into a series of hybrid signifiers. Pulverization-in-reverse becomes the medium through which 'the recombination of society' is unfolded. Eventually, the process might bring about the final blurring of the boundaries between the Monad and Peristalsis by fragmenting the nomenclatures that are still available and injecting them into each other. From this condition, who knows where sociocultural representation might go? Into intergalactic space? Will it perhaps return as a kind of panspermia and re-fertilize our global semiosphere, thereby, in a radical sense, making us capable of transcending our condition? We cannot know for sure. We will have to wait and see. All things being equal, the Monad and Peristalsis can still be identified 'individually', even if they are mutually dependent or overlapping. However, the concept of Peristalsis may also be usefully developed into an object of further hybridization. On the one hand, we want to retain the resources of 'grand abstraction'. On the other hand, we simultaneously want to maintain the element of a 'lower' bodily function that makes possible a basic 'grounding' of the overall metaphorical construction. Accordingly, we will now introduce the concept of P/peristalsis, which will perhaps also fit the experience of a certain ambivalence. No doubt, P/peristalsis has more in common with the Monad than with the Forgotten Organ. Evidently, there is a danger that P/peristalsis might 'implode' and turn into an attribute of the Monad. Stated simply, P/peristalsis emerges conceptually at the point of transition from a general overflow of imaginary materiality to a lack of tolerance in terms of specific imagination. In P/peristalsis, transcription is brought into relation with mediation. But transcription as such is not really mediation. Perhaps paradoxically, P/peristalsis may give us a glimpse into the deepest meaning of transmission 'inside' the body politic. A particular effect of P/peristalsis is on the Forgotten Organ. Ambivalence in terms of cohesive power is a small price to pay for autonomous effects of democratic sustainability. The citizens' pleasure can be displaced and fertilized politically only to a certain limit. Evidently enough, one-to-one pleasure will come at a heavy price. While this may perhaps not be difficult to follow, we propose the concept of P/peristalsis as a fundamental framework for an extended understanding of sociocultural representation and, in turn, the entire field of political practice. A space of transmission is created in which the gulag called expectation succumbs to sustainable trajectories of continuous experimentation as regards immunization. In this attempt at a contingent and 'yummy' position, we would like to sketch out a picture of possible motivation, a picture indebted to essentially unintended and actually failed principles of behavioural design, if you will. The advantages of 'supplementary inflatability' become clear when behaviour is

considered in terms of social closure. Insisting on that strategy in a long-term perspective would probably prove unwise. Indeed, any kind of insistence always has unforeseen effects that have to be dealt with in pragmatic ways. But let us leave that for now. At any rate, the specific content of 'deflation' is never exclusively determined by factors that are also capable of generating pleasure in a more specific sense. It has been suggested that the aim of our critique is to put forward a new and more complex interpretative framework for understanding certain mechanisms of oversimplification whose powers of manipulation today are overwhelming—a response to the postcultural challenge. However, things are actually a bit more complex than that. As is evident, the principal source of future variability in sociodiversity is the prevailing quantity of contemporary discourses in our society together with the ways in which these discourses are distributed. Some would maintain that the postcultural condition, more than anything else, is characterized by a relatively enormous amount of 'imitation debt' as regards its own possibilities of actually 'characterizing' itself, in part or in whole. Of course, this chain of reasoning is utterly self-defeating at best. In contrast, many citizens now seem to feel that an adequate response to the challenge must involve the problematization rather than the celebration of postcultural opacity, wresting back from a massively sedimented consensus that which was constructed as 'postcultural' in the first place. However, we might as well admit, this is a task of gargantuan dimensions. Within the context of contemporary brains, institutions, organizations, and governmental organs, the maintenance of 'anti-postcultural' perspectives has mostly been thought to depend on the preservation and permanent amplification of postculturalism itself. In that sense, 'alternatives' are seen where none are supposed to be. The presumed crypto-affirmative content of these alternatives has been subject to particular critique. To ensure that the conclusions drawn in relation to this situation are not completely off the map, we must look at the discourse of those who think differently for possible traces or effects of ideological inbreeding or overinclusiveness. To be sure, the mess that is criticism is merely a caricature of the mess that is its object. This is not something we believe; this is something we know. To a great extent, critical activity or behaviour itself thus serves an important purpose as a distributor, or even incubator, of recombinant consensual structures. Put another way, agents of consensual dispersion are to be considered omnipresent. Anybody anywhere inevitably participates in the embodiment of the ways in which subjects and structures are always already infected with what they do not want to be or become. It is not surprising to witness how 'those who think differently' do so only supposedly. One is forced to observe the true extent of in-depth consensual transmission on its own terms, if at all. Why should it be claimed that the constancy of certain types of ideological replication should be undermined in the specific interest of some 'other' position? Viewed in terms of proliferate advantage or gain, discursive differentiation simply becomes a form of survival. This is very important. One person's pleasure of proliferation may be quite 'sane', indeed even hygienic, and still become the source of another person's malady. In many cases, imitation in the sense of inspiration is abjected as the Other of contemporary subjectivity, but can never be fully repressed or excluded. Then again, the general concepts of 'otherness' and 'exclusion' all too often lend themselves to consensual mutations of subjectivity. On the edge of the overall metaphysiology of Peristalsis, the desperate expansion of postcultural patterns may find a temporary foothold. Peristalsis as such may even

make perfect sense in a context completely defined by postcultural parameters. To provide evidence of this, all we have to do is turn our attention to certain undeniable symptoms of saturation. Still, we should not overlook the fact that the basic status of 'evidence' remains in process. Of course, when all is said and done, an indicator of the postcultural is no more 'evident' than an indicator of Peristalsis. By injecting a species of 'kenotic' foreign bodies into what cannot be reproduced within the mental environments of either the postcultural condition or Peristalsis, an attempt might be made to develop a horizon of representation capable of transcending the fixed coordinates of one-to-one metaphysiology, while simultaneously making possible the proliferation of pre-established vectors and trajectories. By an irony of history, the survival of meaning still seems something of a puzzle, at least to some. And the general overflow of consensual logic is in many cases barely noticed, not even by the most observant agents. Consensual adaptation provides a way of connecting survival and reproduction without necessitating too much mental differentiation. At this point, the question of stereotyping usually appears, perhaps never more urgently than when some phenomenon of 'excess' apparently resists or deflates representation, and may not be 'really there' in the first place. Complexity regarded as an 'average' diachronic object is in a continual state of evolution, and contemporary expressions of consensual inflation represent only one single aspect of one or two moments in that evolution. In any case, especially on a political level, a precarious balance seems to exist somewhere between excitation and inhibition. The body politic, in all its historical forms, is the overall mechanism of behavioural coordination in terms of transmission, either directly, through a distribution of components of consciousness, or indirectly, through artificially mutated combinations of mentality. But we would be completely mistaken to interpret the sociocultural supersoma as in any way privileged as regards intraception. Tracing the logic of the body of society reveals the general significance of opacity to the 'secretion' of identity formation. There are, indeed, a whole lot of strange and fuzzy things going on here. As we might expect, however, the body of representation is not entirely immune to the permanent influence of citizens or the macrobodies of organizations and institutions. On the other hand, it has often—and rightly—been stressed that 'everybody' (the citizens, their organizations and institutions, even the body politic) must conform to the long-term conditions of representation. Instead of defining critical behaviour in terms of symptomatic or otherwise conspicuously centrifugal registers, we suggest that an adequate strategy of sociocultural transformation would, in a certain sense, be better defined as that behavioural aspect in the relevant agent that might be produced by means of an arbitrary inhibition, or excitation, based on selected impulses of self-preservation. No doubt, the development of more effective stimuli would make the tradition of 'critical consensus' increasingly irrelevant. Conversely, the reconditioning of maladapted strategies of deflation would probably become more characteristic, and unintentionally create new forms of social closure. The tension between the intraideological desire for transparency and the interideological tolerance to, or indeed demand for, opaque reproduction will probably never be entirely resolved. The pleasures of opacity do not in any way necessitate or imply an unwanted burden of complexity. On the contrary, the sociocultural enthusiasm in question is very much in tune with the fact that the body politic, as an overall agent, remains subject to blind historical forces. Doubtlessly, however, outright teleophobia would

ultimately prove to be fatal. There will always be sufficient implicit assumptions for the dominant agenda to appear to be legitimate. Recent interpretations of opaque forms of behaviour have tended to focus on motivation as pleasure driven in a somewhat oversimplified way, but there can be little doubt that everybody involved to a great extent have hoisted their flags on the mast of aimlessness in a sort of buried-alive gesture of misplaced anticipation. The ways in which futility and teleology are combined often appear to be somewhat arbitrary. Real pointlessness, however, is always somewhere else. It is widely believed that imposing a burden of complexity on other citizens can somehow in itself be interpreted as an expression of sovereignty. Nevertheless, this also implies a number of misunderstandings in terms of symbolic self-preservation. In most cases, regaining the burden will inevitably prove to be the next task. On the other hand, a return to complexity presupposes having left it in the first place. Everybody knows that genuine complexity must remain a foreign body. It can only be shared by agents who generally consider themselves to be solipsists. Of course, solipsism is not simply the ultimate myopic form of autonomy, or even the most privileged one. Among those opinions that are produced by a little knowledge, and dispelled by a little more, is the belief that solipsism contains almost boundless resources of selfish power that can be transformed into sociocultural relevance in a quite simple way. Somehow, it seems as if the concept of selfishness is becoming less and less defined as the concept of relevance becomes progressively more foregrounded. The history of solipsism is only beginning to be written and it seems clear that, appropriate enough in a period like ours, the majority of citizens are generally more concerned with specific problems of subjective identity than with the essential issues of the history of solipsism itself. One might very well question the real meaning of these citizens' behaviour. But such questioning would probably be doomed to be short-lived—just as the written history of solipsism has so far been. There is, however, much confusion about the precise definition of 'short-lived'. An almost terrifying abyss of all kinds of ontological imagination, a wealth of 'micro-eschatological responsibilities' opens up before us. It has been suggested that the End is the basic reality of the Beginning. Both have, each in itself, an important aesthetic, and even a political resonance, in that they draw attention to specific modes of motivational operation and thus become accessible to each individual, depending on modifiability. In most cases, the ontological content of the Beginning tends to be 'self-adhesive', in the best sense of the word. On the other hand, it is perhaps in the ontological schemes of the End that an individual's attitude to immortality shows itself to be most ambivalent. We have now reached the point where it is necessary to undertake the task of defining 'immortality' in terms of deliberate oversimplification. Recent research has claimed that immortality is simply permanent mutation; however, this might seem a little too tautological to some, or at least not satisfactory enough. In the present context we are, of course, unable to enter into a more detailed discussion of immortality in any specific sense, but in our case it seems likely that one of the most serious obstacles to a productive interpretation would be the almost complete lack of in-depth punctuation in Danish sociocultural ontology. Is the ontology of the End, as the 'quintessential' mental vehicle of ambivalence, an attitude of the mind that is destined to disappear in the long run? This seems to be the outlook of many trajectories of thought that, conversely, take their point of departure in the ontology of the Beginning. The real question, however, is not that of the Beginning versus the

End, but that of their interrelationship. A banal example: In many cases, a source of pleasure can be found in the basic realization that things often tend to come to an end before they ever have a chance of beginning; yes, one might indeed ask if there ever was any ontological 'takeoff' in a more basic sense of the word. Many of the correspondences between the Beginning and the End are only occasional and rather unimportant; what is more interesting is what constantly drives us, almost quixotically, to transmit ontological components to and fro between the two realms. In general, the entanglements between 'not-yet' and 'no-longer' have been a perennial problem and, at times, a recognized source of outright embarrassment for sociocultural discourse, most evidently, of course, in its Utopian variants. In terms of aesthetic experience, no position is forced to obey any 'law' of irreversibility. In artistic practice, however, there may be a tendency towards the view that the historical representation of basic motivation for production should be more or less encapsulated in an aura of fatal mutation—i.e., should be more tragic. Very often, the 'reality' of self-parody in certain meta-Utopian approaches primarily acts as a prefabricated destiny, as it were. Tragedy, very often, is the cradle of boredom, some would suggest. Although it does sound a bit cynical, there may be some truth in it. In any event, boredom in detail has very little to do with farce. We have to understand the despair, but also the lethal exaltation, that may grow from the ontology of farce as a post-tragic phenomenon. Historical perpetuation needs new foreign bodies, once the old ones have been thoroughly misunderstood. The interpretation of history has suffered from being seen, in its dominant emphasis on cumulative effects, as embodying an opportunistic attitude toward teleological modification and as depending, more or less explicitly, on privileged patterns of differentiation. As regards entropy, in terms of the burden of complexity, one could rush victoriously into one's own grave. And yet, what to the 'victor' might look neither like failure nor success might to a detached spectator look mostly like a lapse. The corpus of genuinely adequate interpretation has not expanded much in recent years, although there have been important new contributions now and then, here and there. We have above all witnessed a remarkable explosion of perhaps well-intentioned, but essentially quite harmless, approaches. Thus we might suggest that the purpose of historical purposelessness needs to be reinvented. The major part of contemporary artistic motivation owes its significance not simply to some specifically evocative framework but also, and more importantly, to the fact that its stimulus of structural obviousness is increasingly being programmed into the public imagination. Thus, what some may find quite disturbing about the experience of historical underdevelopment is that the immediacy of that experience is lost along the way, that it starts to seem somewhat foreign and no longer familiar. Very often, coadapted structures of anticipation set the stage for complex forms of cheating behaviour. There is some indication of a split, particularly as observed in recent investigations into patterns of artistic representation, between discourses of deviation in terms of the capability of immunization and discourses of lowest-level 'internal necessity'. All things considered, here is the historical point at which the concept of 'junk transmission' comes into the foreground. In many cases, the signifiers of 'personal experience' are positioned within the coordinates of anachronism, zealously guarded like the gold at Ford Knox. So far, the growing body of ambivalence-resistant vocabularies has rested on some perceived community of interest between the stereotypes of the art producer and the citizen, at least in terms

of orthosemiotic convenience: artistic practice in its non-self-adhesive aspects is one place where this was manifestly not always the case. Now, the element that sums up all the dimensions of underhanded pragmatism—inscribing them within the same circle of model psychosis, if you will—appears to be the phenomenon of ‘borrowed enemies’. Of course, any cult of artistic hyperfertility must remain completely embedded in a logic of implicit reversal. In general, the value of rethinking is still commonly identified as the negation of intervention. The objective stupidity of artistic ontology, though, does not drop from on high onto a bald pointy-head like a dead bird, or like a piece of designer furniture on the moon without any connection to the plethora of objects already left there by astronauts. Artistic identification usually gives rise to camp followers. When the reflex of ‘someone else’s ideological promiscuity’ vanishes from the eccentric moment of artistic ethos, and the contractual basis of representation collapses, the signifiers apparently begin to blindly transform. At this point, the need of ‘conceptual colonies’ arises. As regards the targeted ‘ordinary people’, it is extremely questionable whether the theories and motivations for the practice of the sociocultural agents concerned are really as different from each other as their diverse jargon would lead us to believe. Having exposed the chronic ‘storage crisis’ of any sufficiently ‘mature’ pretext for discourse, one must go on exposing any potential quality traps attached to exposure itself. A sustainable position of modification, however, is only to be gained through the hard labour of cultivating the registers of a ‘brand-new’ Cheops impulse. That said, truly productive configurations of recombination can only begin where the specific patterns of quality, and quantity, imagination have finally exhausted themselves. Differentiation cannot be reduced to one or the other. Therefore, our concern with the environments of artistic or art-related practices of proliferation, with forms of excitation as well as mechanisms of generative inhibition, is actually a somewhat ‘easier’ task than it might seem. According to some, one should never forget that transparency is the province of opacity. The Monad may ‘illuminate’ Peristalsis, no doubt. But instead of involving itself with the tentacles of misplaced admission, the Monad should always stay away, beyond them; instead of losing itself in dominant structures secreted from the brains of citizens, institutions, or organizations, the Monad should forever be grasping at new resources of mutation. Nonetheless, wherever there is some external secretion, there is some perspective of differentiation. What will happen to the Forgotten Organ? Will it remain essentially preoccupied with ‘itself’, instead of with the macro-context of Peristalsis, and eventually be pulverized by it? Perhaps the Forgotten Organ needs to emerge from itself and become completely alien to itself. Recent research seems to suggest that Peristalsis sutures the Monad inside the Forgotten Organ. Adapting to our own spectacle is quite easy; fully comprehending the resources implied in it is much harder; blending the two in a ‘definitive’ synthesis or some other adequate description is hardest of all. Also, one person’s intentional lack of adaptability may very well turn out to be essentially a vacuole in an overall perspective of consciousness. Evidently, resistance in the Monad may be completely coincident with the modification process of Peristalsis. Indeed, it would seem, the *raison d’être* of the body politic always contains more aspects of cheating behaviour than it can reconstruct within its own terms. Some suggest that art should at least provide us with a ‘ladder’ to the common gut, should show us Peristalsis ‘within ourselves’. The problem of ‘grounding’ in terms of the Monad, though, cannot be recognized

exclusively within the context of Peristalsis. Strictly speaking, the body politic does not allow for closure, at least not on a permanent basis. When citizens sometimes choose to entrust themselves totally to the body politic, it may in some sense be an attempt, induced by they know not what, to walk on their head, just this once. We will not succeed in understanding Peristalsis without remembering the nature of the Monad, but we will not succeed in remembering the Monad at all without first forgetting its nature, at least partly. The Forgotten Organ itself is multi-tiered. Moreover, the points of transmission between the Monad and the Forgotten Organ are quite complex. They may be composed of such elements as failed otherness, near-perverse enthusiasm, semiconservative forms of coordination, theatricality, patterns of sub-robotic competition, and arbitrary aversion. The compulsion to assume a certain behaviour itself is a specific component of 'violence' that is very often assumed to be found in the Monad. It is in the very nature of the Monad to be hypersensitive, even 'hysterical', when confronted with external events. One could ask whether the overwhelming dimension of contingency in the sociocultural environment might eventually do irreparable damage to the Monad. One should, however, be aware that the Monad is no ordinary beast. A large part of its apparatus of adaptation feeds on endogenous equivalents that cannot be paralleled or represented by exterior systems or articulated in a context of incompatible amplification. Let advantage or disadvantage be what they may, relatively to immediate interpretation the Monad presents itself in an inverted posture, as it were; or, because the practice of the Monad is somehow capable of permanent self-recombination, Peristalsis becomes relevant to the Monad mostly by virtue of its seemingly unlimited potential of deflatability. Thus, as observed in its deflated condition, from the position of the Monad the body politic may indeed appear 'anti-social', since it exists as an external 'foreign body', indeed almost beyond representation. Attempts at discursive integration are primarily based on efforts to trace, as closely as possible, the object from which the asymmetry has been abstracted. Always keep in mind that symmetry is not everything, not even normatively. Regarding any kind of ideo-political fetishism much seems to suggest a deeper root in hypochondria, insofar as that principle can be applied to the body politic as an object of quasi-paradoxical hygienic desire. Still, the entire concept of desire, with its many layers of sedimented meaning, is of necessity vague and is now in a state of constant flux. Perhaps there used to be a constitutive inadequacy, an imbalance between desire and its object. In our present condition, no desire is flexible enough to subsume the cornucopia of semi-drowsy reflexes that it triggers. However, many contemporary citizens, organizations, and institutions are highly conformable to all types of desire, and apparently even capable of extending them *ad nauseam*, because desire turns out to be the optimum medium for their behaviour and desire is essential to almost every discourse of subjectivity or objectivity that belongs to the realm of contemporary relevance, whatever type it may be. On the other hand, the concepts of 'subjectivity' and 'objectivity' are confusing and ambiguous and in urgent need of clarification, especially in a conceptual ecology where agents, such as Peristalsis, P/peristalsis, the Monad, and the Forgotten Organ, strongly assert themselves. Lack of desire seems to originate in an observation or sensibility that brings us back to the notions of incompetence and pulverization. This is not the place to discuss phenomena of objective stupidity at the length they deserve, though, and we must content ourselves with a few briefly

outlined observations on relevant forms of sociocultural or artistic instrumentalization. As suggested above, Peristalsis cannot be grasped in its functional essence, only in its effects. These may take the form of representational configurations, appearing as symptomatically meaningful and thus manifesting themselves as a sometimes quite intolerable burden of complexity in the agent. The Monad, however, does not allow for an equivalent of that complexity within the parameters of structural tolerance set up by the Monad itself. A desperate need for 'genuine desire' may drive the agent to descend into the depths of the body politic. And there s/he may enter a state of genuine and adequate oversimplification. Primitivism in all its aspects appears to have preoccupied people throughout the history of western civilization. It goes without saying, though, that the 20th century marked the apex of modern ambivalence vis-à-vis primitivism. Unhappily, our contemporary postcultural life is often too short and too complex for more 'expanded' levels of appropriation to be achieved. And so most people never really get beyond the primordial soup of their everyday lives, which has practically no affinity with primitivism as we are proposing it. Among the leading peculiarities of our present age is that it is 'officially' an age of almost uncontrolled proliferation of utilitarian differentiation. To be sure, that proliferation cannot be characterized as 'mostly' stupid or sophisticated. Whether ours is essentially an age of primitivism or not seems to be anybody's guess. This ambiguity has several sources. One, apparently, is mass-democratization. Another is the inherent qualities of language. Both are inscribed in a reciprocal relation of historical intensification. Any rapid outline of this structure can be no more than a rough sketch omitting finer shadings. However, oversimplification might be more advantageous to us than misplaced differentiation. Uncompromising rejection of taken-for-granted forms of cheating behaviour and unadulterated aversion to bogus selfishness could teach us things that we could never learn from 'pure' ambivalence. In the postcultural age, with the rise of Peristalsis and the general growth of the common gut, behaviour is governed mostly by mediation of sedimented thought and only partly by a basic differentiation of the technologies of imagination. If Peristalsis is a generative agent, and thus an object of historical reality rather than a construct devised to save time and mental effort, it is necessarily subtly stratified; indeed, it often distinctly breeds mutually hostile clichés. One can, indeed, get high on the 'energies' generated in the sphere of hostility between these clichés. Our response to this euphoriant antagonism is to consider it as if it were a natural thing. Mankind has outgrown old forms of applied evolution and has not yet developed new ones. We have raised questions; most likely we have resolved none of the enigmas of our present condition. Presented as 'evidence' in a clever enough way, truncated pieces of meat may lead one to prefer the wrong body politic, if you will. It has been suggested that, sooner or later, the logic of Peristalsis will win the day and the Monad come to think systematically against itself. We could not agree less. We do not in any way suggest that the prevailing hegemony of continuously recoded coquetry with strategies of immunization is approaching its end—at least not for any reason that could be specifically or unequivocally related to a decline somewhere in the existing structures of incorporation. In a perspective of one-to-one symptomatology, the phobias and philiias concerned would simply be the cries of the Monad and the Forgotten Organ struggling with the digestive forces of Peristalsis. Very often we have told ourselves that the ultimate exposure of the Monad to Peristalsis would

cause the imaginary of the body politic to implode in chaos, or at least produce an overwhelmingly complicated condition of autoimmunity. Are we perhaps ill informed? No. Peristalsis has far from exhausted all its significant possibilities, and neither has the Monad. The resources of reciprocity to be modified are unlimited. The prevailing metabolism, in fact, seems to be generating too many stimuli of all-too-obvious adhesion, too much debris, to be 'safely and sanely' absorbed by the Monad. Another microscopied scenario of intraception has been suggested. There is a growing awareness focusing on the 'elementary' dimension of the metabolites. What sort of metabolites, you might ask? The idea that all significant possibilities are far from exhausted cannot be confined to the 'main characters' alone. Under certain circumstances, fetishizing 'the usual suspects' (Peristalsis, the Monad, the Forgotten Organ) may all too easily lead to a proliferation of provisos. We are aware that the metabolites must be considered agents of nonspecific behaviour. As such, they represent an intermediate regime of subversion transcending the realm of reciprocity commanded by Peristalsis, the Monad, and even the Forgotten Organ. There is probably much more complexity to come in terms of new influences and transmission—perhaps from intergalactic space—though we cannot predict or, in any relevant or interesting detail, imagine what forms it might take. Axiom: the emergence of coadapted systems of (apparent) pulverization is the beginning of all P/peristalsis. One might similarly propose the introduction of the M/monad. This might seem like a logical step catalyzed by the 'microscopic climax' indicated by the metabolite regime. On the other hand, such a hypostasis should probably never be advertised in a public context. Recent experimentation has suggested that the Monad should always-only be considered the end of a chapter, or perhaps rather an illusion consequent on the attempt to encompass a mere zone of the body politic in a locally coherent totality of 'somehow' coordinated metabolites. The line between such pragmatic readings and genuinely adequate species of interpretation should, however, be kept as fluid, and perhaps indistinct, as possible. Then again, we would suggest, something could be made of utilitarian, indeed opportunistic, forms of behaviour. Many times in the past, even the most adequate processes of proliferation, differentiation, and modification have, on some level, been exhausted or seemingly subverted by their own grand binary models, only to recover their vigour later on. Not vigour, though, as much as contractual revitalization. We can today say that we have experienced this phenomenon and its mutations *ad nauseam*. At any rate, as regards the capacity for recombination in terms of sociocultural closure, the basic processes of anticipatory deviation behaviour seem to have reached a significant climax, while the capabilities of 'strategic oversimplification' in many ways have declined. However, contemporary complexity, to a staggering extent, is nothing but so many symptoms of structural oversimplification. We are convinced that 'complexity as such' will become extinct. As to what might happen next, with the body politic and its organs, we cannot predict—beyond elaborating the details of our present achievements in terms of metabolism, hypochondria, etc. In most cases, one's own point of view is something to be imitated only by oneself, and nothing else. But, does that imply that we are essentially pleading the case of 'one's own' as the only framework possible? In the general perspective of sustainability—in Peristalsis and in the Monad, and probably in the realm of metabolite degradation as well—the future mechanisms of adaptiveness are *terra incognita* to contemporary interpretation, insofar as they

apparently refuse to be absorbed relevantly into the comedy of ready-made imagination. The 'challenge' from the metabolites offers a unique opportunity to engage with new bodies of 'intermediate self-understanding'. (We should emphasize, though, that we do not have an 'alternative ecology' in mind here. We do not support, say, some sort of mental Christiania as a space of retirement for endangered species of identity.) It might be quite interesting, though, to subject the realm of overall metabolism to further exploration, to array as many of its components as possible, and estimate their virtual trajectories under the aspect of future sociocultural evolution, even if this task may seem incomprehensively vast. However, it has been a distinctive feature of strategies of accumulation, such as taxonomy, mapping, or filing, that their traditional success as markers of modern enlightenment has increasingly been in inverse proportion to their reputation as vehicles of 'posthuman sentimentalism'. Consider this: the whole thing cannot be boiled down to a matter of excitation versus inhibition, as it were. Dealing with the 'compulsion to enlighten' we find ourselves too open to endogenous elephantiasis or, conversely, too destitute of barriers against incorporation into external configurations of oversimplification; for which reason this somewhat diffuse dichotomy would have little interest. The problematic status of 'strategically alienated' practice is the product of profound doubt about any desire to play upon 'otherness' as potential 'sameness'. All in all, we suggest that conventionally reorganized subjectivity has now finally been dispersed across an expanded field of attention. In our opinion, we must abolish any idea that the possible 'limitation' of sameness is structurally owing to otherness, and vice versa. Evidently, we can think of the whole complex as a trap of convergence. What we present here constitutes what we might call an outline of a behaviour that does not base its own specific patterns of expectation on either acceptance or rejection of the internal power of motivation. It would be wrong to suggest a relation in a 'classic' sense between the Monad we have in mind and, say, the surrounding networks of metabolic reactions where outputs from one digestive reaction are inputs to other digestive reactions; our consideration must synthesize the Monad and the metabolites in a temporary 'body' of total modification or hybridization. Somehow, the Monad enters into a state of 'quixotic' closure with the metabolome, i.e., the total network of metabolites. However, as the 'punctual symbiosis' of the Monad-metabolome is a very complex phenomenon, it cannot be discussed and demonstrated until later. Suffice it to say that both the Monad and the metabolome are 'evacuated' and 'elevated' at once. In this structure of behaviour we see an example of two agents reciprocally transforming themselves by inscribing themselves into one another, without actually becoming either what the other is or a 'specific' something else. Now, if we contextualize the Monad-metabolome as a conceptual metaphor in a sociocultural context, this step would seem to immediately present us with fresh difficulties, not only in terms of conspicuous proliferation but also with regard to an equally conspicuous danger of closure. We Scandinavians have a certain reputation for being very closed in terms of our national psychopathology, though we usually consider ourselves quite fragmented. Still, it is better to accept an undeserved smorgasbord of fragmentation than to reject a deserved burden of complexity. However, 'undeserved' or 'deserved' is not really our subject. In contemporary cheating behaviour, the investigation of ambivalence and the exploration of structural aversion all too easily become sisters in banality. Indeed, we propose that

the moments of average expectable ideologization that seem to constitute our contemporary totality must primarily be approached as reflexes of the conditions dictated by the Peristalsis 'paradigm'. On some level, does intellectual mediation end where 'the digestive forces' begin, or vice versa? We will leave this question open. Instead, we shall now descend further into the realms of potential pulverization as regards the repertoires or resources of an adequate imagination. The question is this: How must relevant tendencies of selfishness be conceptualized in the interest of overcoming the epiphenomenal species of teleology secreted from the Monad-metabolome in response to its environment? The fact that the outer relations of destruction remain essentially stereotypical suggests that the behaviour of the Monad-metabolome must accordingly, qua reactive, remain functionally superfluous. On the other hand, we may be struck by the fact that effects are produced at a number of levels. Thus, some suggest, if the context supplies a 'pretext' to be transcended, a 'challenge' conspicuously inviting specific opposition, and such a reaction is not in evidence, although 'something' has clearly changed, we may at last come to have the essential structure of motivational behaviour in the Monad-metabolome that one can only look forward to for later times. Many people think that some privileged concept of 'transition' or 'passage' might be used as a peephole into a future space of post-Peristaltic supersession, into some 'post-colonial' condition of abolition. Why is that? Could it be that they intend their 'contribution' to be a compensatory strategy of survival necessitated by fear of their own immune response vis-à-vis the appearance of ideological bottlenecks, a satire of their own patterns of self-adhesion? In terms of intra-Peristaltic strategy, the 'solutions' provided by the contemporary 'symptomal reading' cannot satisfy a postcultural spirit, such as ours is or ought to be. There will inevitably be objections to what we have just suggested, and for that we are pleased. We do agree, however, with at least some of those who argue that our suggestions should, of course, also be objects of permanent modification. In terms of orthodoxy, perhaps most evident in its Danish variation, one cannot argue productively about sociocultural issues without some general sense of dispensability as regards nomenclature. In the previous we touched on the figure of the Klein bottle: great care must constantly be taken to avoid the Klein bottle's space from turning into a bottleneck itself. Indeed, the ability to pulverize any quality trap before it changes into a burden of complexity will always leave something to be desired. We are also in clear sympathy with those who suggest that the Klein bottle's space should never be one of asepsis. As regards the idealization, indeed the fetishization, of democracy's 'automatic writing', we frankly confess that we find everything obscure as soon as it goes beyond the table of contents and the index. What we must do is place an adequate horizon of degradability into a context of ways of thinking and ways of feeling, ways of conceptualizing what we are and what we might be. We take seriously those who suggest that our task is not to sustain degradability but to sustain ourselves for degradability, not to make sustainability work but to take advantage of it in an adequately degradable way. Monoatheism of the sustainable, poly-atheism of the degradable—this is what we need. Unless the one can be seen against the backdrop of the other, the whole scenario is pulverized, as it were. A suggested recuperation: the agents toss about like infusoria in a drop of water. Or, when anti-matter confronts matter, when the irrepressible desire of ideological inbreeding confronts comprehensive speculation of the highest possible imaginative order, all must

inevitably fly *in fumo*, some would expect. Accordingly, new models should be introduced. If one approaches the world with a complex assortment of lenses, strange and grotesque multitudes of worlds will be revealed. Clearly, this terrain of 'animalcular' behaviour still remains uncharted. Is there a more profound way to link the question of immunization to the notion of randomness so dear to so many? How might the negation of sociocultural teleology strategically operate within such a relationship? Which kind of pictorial representation could be used to illustrate this? If we choose the example of axonometric projection, the whole axonometry would be pulverized, the 'axes' of immunity, randomness, and teleology would split into multiple paths: a single second would hold not one, but hundreds, of seconds. Just to make sure: the intrinsic inadequacy of this metaphor must not in itself be considered a watertight *promesse de bonheur*. Our opponents are aware of that. They discipline themselves to stay on the subject, and they expect to find that they cannot fix 'immunization' as a simple object of thought. They tell themselves that they keep losing track of the subject. Eventually, they succumb to the illusion that their line of thought proves resistant to discipline. Inevitably, they begin to consider that perhaps this resistance to fixing the subject is essential to the matter at hand. The door to immunity is butted in by teleology, often at the cost of its forehead, they claim. Some might even suggest that the question, *What is immunity?*, is the very riddle of the sphinx that dies when the riddle solved. In a sense, the space between Peristalsis and the Monad, as we present it here, constitutes a case of multiresistance. It seems to indicate a state that has clearly not only been outgrown by the 'conspicuousness' of its own determinants but also been transcribed into the burden of complexity subsequently secreted from these determinants, as it were. At this stage the faint of heart might wish to give up and simply concede that a sufficiently well-constructed Klein bottle cannot easily be broken. Despite the creation of special incubators, it has so far proved impossible to hatch efficient enough carriers of infection, slow or fast, symptomatic or asymptomatic. All infectious repertoires change, mutate, evolve, and eventually disappear, sometimes to be resurrected in more glorious incarnations. Any Mozart of immunization must have his Salieri of teleology. And in the overall picture, their trajectories are usually crowned by reciprocal recombination. Any burden of complexity should probably be considered in that perspective. The rich load of sociocultural challenges pulls everybody down to earth, if you will, to the context of everyday life. It is a needless truism to say that the concretization of the body politic is in a state of change and flux. In conclusion, let us move on to an area that has our special interest, the function of pure abstraction as an 'enzyme' in the process of history. Hypothesis: For the time being, excitation is totally immersed in inhibition, and going deeper and deeper into it. Any imbalance between the two, where inhibition far outweighs excitation, indeed transforms itself into new forms of excitation, should come as no surprise. Actually, it is our general impression that this has already happened: today, the most exciting strategies turn out to be strategies of inhibition. Metaphor: pure abstraction is obviously nourished in a Petri dish. The primacy of the concrete over the abstract is a habit of mind. One could suggest, though, that an important aspect of concretization lies in its potential for pure abstraction. Historically, abstraction-driven behaviour has operated on the blurry boundary between a critique of concrete reality and a parody of the critique of concrete reality. Taking an active interest in pure abstraction means improving the quality of abstraction as a

‘strange catalyst’ in terms of the historical contribution, the level of discursive quality, implying—if there is any justification in talking about discursive quality as such—quality in terms of inhibition, activation, and excitation. Of course, such transcription only becomes truly exciting when the ‘product’ of abstraction is reinvested as a historical agent. Obviously, there are several reasons for our interest in this. The traditional ‘disease’ of historical ontology has mostly manifested itself in a certain pedestrian quality of representation, a sort of semiotic anaemia; everything is thrown into the same ‘melting pot’ of utilitarian tepidness. There is a direct and easily demonstrable connection between different kinds, forms, and styles of historical representation, on the one hand, and the concrete spaces of consensual embarrassment, on the other. In our view, the situation may very well be critical. Apparently, the tension inside the overinflated bodies of representation is now so great that the thin shell of historical reality cannot contain it much longer. It is, of course, important to be aware of the fluid, streamy character of these bodies. It is pure abstraction we democratic citizens need for historical catalysis to come off successfully. Whether we will manage to do this, others must judge. However, history is always-already only beginning to be opened up for inspection. Strategies of catalysis probably run counter to the nature of historical ontology. Some would suggest that the incarnation of pure abstraction will also necessarily be its humiliation, regardless of its efficiency as a ‘chemo-historical’ agent. One might say that pure abstraction contains so much of today that we will only know what to make of it in some remote tomorrow. The process of history stands and falls on its being alive—and whatever lives, changes. In any case, the prevailing concepts of change relate most directly to ‘specific determination’ and its many offshoots. Discursive modification travels on the rails of sociocultural consensus, according to a mail-train schedule. Everything that is alive changes. That also goes for the carriers of historical fossilization. The end of paradox is everywhere. We are surrounded by it—it is sewn into the warp and weft of our lives. But today, when the digestive forces of Peristalsis apparently have imploded the very reality of paradox, sociocultural ambivalence has no roots; it is, in many cases, the refuge of old repertoires of ambiguity, as well of as old-young reactions to those repertoires. Our opponents suggest that the Monad is constantly renewing itself, and consequently is always different—a little or a lot—from what it used to be. Extending beyond the qualities normally associated with the Monad as an intra-Peristaltic agent, they often wish to stress the complexity, variety, and relevance of that ‘competence’ today. But, alas, contemporary success in terms of specificity, even if arch-contemporary, seems to no longer fit contemporary failure in terms of pure abstraction. A strategic sense of myopia does not exclude access to the resources of a buried-alive sense of megalomania. A long time has passed since the greater part of consensual differentiation turned out to be mostly about the promiscuity of power. A harmful symmetry of immunization is more useful than a useful symmetry of immunization, our opponents seem to argue. Pre-emptive consumption is our ontology; it nourishes our long march through Peristalsis. The technocrats of reinvention project their not-yet excrements along certain coordinates. Differences in contraceptive heuristics are due only to differences in the coordinates. However, what was decided among the microbial agents of the Forgotten Organ cannot be annulled by an act of Peristalsis: “How can one be an enemy of erasure, whatever that may be?” It need not be emphasized that tolerance to inhibition has had a

tremendous impact on the existing structures of excitation. How, then, to resist multiresistance in terms of metaphysiological replication? Someday, perhaps, the prevailing spirit of mediation will develop into something important and interesting. Our opponents claim that only time will show whether the strategies of ambivalence will have any metabolic impact in terms of an institutionally articulated practice. They are completely right about that. To fully understand and appreciate a reductionist problematic requires an understanding of the intricate trajectories of delay. The basic structure of oversimplification has not yet been adequately interpreted. The following question may have emerged during our discussion: To what extent can pure abstraction be applied, e.g., to misplaced modifiability? How do we become 'excessive' subjects capable of raising such questions anyway? Until now, all attempts to approach the 'parallel' problem of stupidity with a specific standard of salience have failed. One might say that the contemporary history of general stereotyping begins this very moment. Total synchronization presents a model of discursive stimulus that is left to draw upon its own capacity for self-opacity. The 'well-intentioned' nature of that model creates an ironclad protection against mutagenic agents that much more easily penetrate into other discourses. The producers of new constellations of signifiers generally manage to make arrangements that are harmonious and adjusted in their forms to the rules of fashionable contradiction. But they fail in unexpected ways, most decisively because they are ignorant about their sense of negotiation in terms of historical credibility. The mental nomenclature of survival value very often becomes incestuous, because it idealizes and fixes its foundational concepts in a resonance chamber of unitary specificity, as it were. One may try to replace the body of realpolitik by hastily made homunculi of junk otherness. Overfeeding is as old as mankind. The contemporary critique of 'life in linguistic space' has yet to provide a satisfactory answer to the question of the politics of autoimmunity, too often simply reiterating circular arguments for and against emerging forms of zero tolerance as a foundation for models of interpretative struggle. The principle of the 'not-yet-phased-out' has long been the rule of 'revolution'. Many systems of complex prestige are contradictory and, indeed, conflicting. A state of exception may mean different things in different systems of 'civil war'. We should examine how foreign bodies of 'idiosyncratic myth' invested with variable elements of constructed exclusion may change the implicit status of oppositional imagination and our relations to the concept of context in general. Having said that, there is, of course, also an extensive repertoire of standard misunderstandings concerning macroscopic and microscopic events capable of 'enriching' the genres of identity. From the point of view of ironic non-creativity, much of the above may seem meaningless. However, new forms of self-preservation require new values of withdrawal. It is a wonder that no one has yet made a study of irony from the point of view of 'unintended asepsis'. In our view, it is of the utmost importance for future approaches to get acquainted with such things in order to adequately maintain their powers of anticipation in a state of sufficient randomness. How does a style of banalization change our way of knowing, say, ourselves and others? The more the patterns of sociocultural reactions approach a state of elephantiasis, the sharper the distinction must be between, on the one hand, homeostasis as a medium of utilitarian fitness, and on the other hand, disinterestedness in terms of mutagenic monstrosity. In an orthodox line of thinking, the two, as such, must be far apart from each other. Even so, they do have

certain historical connections. Let us finally consider the question of conservatism in discourse. In short, our thesis is this: In self-organization, the sediments of adaptation must 'adhere' as closely as possible to, and perhaps even be injected into, the determining vector of pulverization. From what we might choose to call an artistic point of view, change in the human brain is much called for, less so environmental flexibility. Another question to be asked at this point: Is the projected 'autonomy' of the environment a permanent factor? And, if so, how do we identify the mechanisms of projection? The organism's capacity must somehow be radically expanded for its reactive capability to grow in expected ways. The environment grows everywhere by itself. In short: one of the borders of average expectable distinction forms the border of conventional mechanisms of redundancy to the historically unavoidable, of which environmental opacity is a part. What is required of us, some would argue, is simply that our desire to produce erasure be matched by our desire to produce closure. To the truly creative art producer, contextual inertia need not be the quiet haven it is for so many weary souls—to him or her it may be a portal into the infinite spaces of Peristalsis. The ups and downs of virtuosity can remain in an essentially parallel position vis-à-vis the context of digestive forces or, conversely, the two on some level can merge into a global 'coprolith'. After all, the resources, of which we can make no meaning in terms of 'robust amplification', will basically remain in a state of contingent accessibility—that is, they will be wasted. In our perspective, a fruitful entanglement exists between the forces of artistic production and the dominant mechanisms of politico-biology, even when disguised as a critique of this very mechanism. Times have changed and so have people. Those who long for crystalline conditions do their longing organically in images or phantasms of semantic consumption. Thus, reproduction will be ambivalent or it will not be at all. Communication is still compulsive, and it will always keep its relevance in terms of sociocultural evolution because it is founded in the basic matrices of conceptual 'packaging': general attention, a proliferation of expectation, a burden of complexity. It remains unclear whether the Monad may in some sense ultimately transcend the event horizon of reciprocal structures suggested in the above, or whether that horizon should rather be considered the price to pay for elasticity in terms of self-transcription—and self-transcription the price to be paid for survival. The fetishistic attention paid to unambiguous answers as far as that goes is indeed a symptom of autoimmunity. The interplay between the digestive forces and the agents of metabolism, taking place not only in the peptic reactions themselves but also in the endogenous 'proofreading' of these reactions, reveals a new perspective of the body politic, as it emerges in the space of entanglement between Peristalsis and the Monad.

